



set against local scenery – proclaims that Red Wing was established in 1857, which makes it one of Minnesota's oldest communities.

The town retains much of its laid-back, 19th-century charm. A brightly-painted trolley tootles around to key sites from Thursday to Monday from the end of May until mid-October. The quaint, one-of-a-kind shopfronts are adorned in the summer with hanging baskets cascading with flowers, in the autumn with cornstalks and – during the late November Thanksgiving season until January 1 – with twinkling lights. And, at the venerable Red Wing Pottery, you still can watch potters turning out the same style of salt-glazed stoneware the family-run company produced in the 1870s.

Then, there is the local arts scene. Beautiful crafts and tempting hand-made gifts are displayed in the charming 1905 train station, still served by a regular Amtrak service to St Paul, and doubling as the city's visitor centre. Every Saturday, from spring until autumn, the station is surrounded by a colourful Farmers' Market, which includes live music (on other days, it's held in front of City Hall or indoors at a local garden centre).

The Anderson Center, sited on an estate outside town, houses art studios and, in February, June and October, there are local arts-and-crafts fairs. Nor are the performing arts ignored – there are summer concerts in the Central Park Band Shell, and year-round theatre, dance and music performances in the handsome 1904 Sheldon Theatre. Farther afield, the Hobgoblin Music venue doubles as a studio and shop for building and selling such traditional instruments as folk harps, mountain dulcimers and banjos.



## THE 16FT-HIGH, *20ft-long boot* WAS CREATED IN 2005 TO CELEBRATE THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMPANY

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE The author and Cheryl Offerman of Explore Minnesota Tourism with the Red Wing Shoe Company's Big Boot; A vendor at the local Farmers' Market; Kathy Silverthorn of the Red Wing Visitors and Convention Bureau and Dan Guida of the Red Wing Arts Association with local crafts; Set beside the Mississippi River, the 1905 Train Station also serves as Red Wing's Visitors Center and as an arts and crafts gallery

Other activity options include rock-climbing up 330ft Barn Bluff, which towers over the town; strolling through lovely Discovery Garden; eagle watching at Colville Park; biking, fishing, golfing, cross-country or down-hill skiing; gaming at the nearby Treasure Island Resort & Casino; and, of course, taking cruises down Ole Man River.

Many visitors prefer to just relax over a meal – or even stay overnight – at the atmospheric 1875 St James Hotel. You can choose a gourmet treat, perhaps accompanied by a local wine, in the atmospheric Port Restaurant, a beer and a snack in Jimmy's British-style pub or – as we chose to do on our last day in Minnesota – dine casually on the Veranda patio overlooking the wide and wonderful Mississippi.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** The Red Wing Visitors and Convention Bureau, [www.redwing.org](http://www.redwing.org), 001 (651) 385 5934; St James Hotel, [www.st-james-hotel.com](http://www.st-james-hotel.com), 001 (651) 388 8246.